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DOUGLAS COLE

Oxford

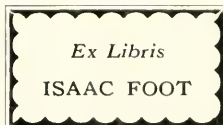
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NEW BEGINNINGS

AND

THE RECORD

BY

DOUGLAS COLE

AUTHOR OF

'POEMS, 1910,' 'THE WORLD OF LABOUR,' ETC.

Oxford

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DOUGLAS COLE.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE,
OXFORD.



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TO
SHERARD VINES

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NEW BEGINNINGS

*The hot heart shall grow cold,
And the young heart old :
Thou alone standest fast,
Song of mine, to the last.*

NEW BEGINNINGS

SPRING SONG

AUTUMN songs in the spring ?
Every song has its season.
Let Youth have its fling :
Only Age has its reason.

Now's no time for regretting ;
Day will come, to look back.
While we lack not, no fretting :
Soon enough shall we lack.

Say you, All's gone and done with ?
Life a well-rounded whole ?
While we've eyes to see sun with
There's no end to the soul.

Nor to sense, if soul sleeps not ;
This love ends, that begins.
He for losses who weeps not
A new joy next day wins.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Life's but losing and winning,
While aught's left worth the crown,
As this coin I set spinning
Heads or tails must come down.

Old loves not forgotten
Live in every new joy;
But if memory turn rotten,
Then no hope for you, boy.

While the past was alive yet,
To the past I was true.
Past is past. Love shall thrive yet.
Off with old's on with new.

December 9, 1912.

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

O LORD of light and laughter and desire,
Young lover, who wouldst make the world
thine own,

Who leavest every spirit a trail of fire,
Seeking from heart to heart the high unknown,
Full soon the seed thy loving ways have sown
Shall branch to grandeur and o'ershadow thee,
When thou art bondman, having made so free,
And jest and laughter to the winds are thrown :
When thou must follow after, who wast sought ;
When thou must buy, who once wast dearly bought.

Seek through the world thy Jack o' Lantern joy :
The hidden truth thou soon shalt understand.

Go on thy way secure, thou radiant boy ;
A little longer dwell in fairyland.

Base sorrow shall not sear thee with its brand :

For thee, and for all spirits like to thine,

To lead you onward to the life divine,

This crooked path of pleasure hath been planned.

Children of light, whose hearts are high and single,

Ye shall know love, where joy and sorrow mingle.

Thy jest turns earnest soon. Now, joyous lad,
Bound on the heart's high venture thou dost go
In chase of wonder, not to make thee glad,
But for the very gladness thou dost know.
Soon from thy quest of rapture shall outgrow
Love, that shall set thy thoughts upon a star :
Thy passions, that so wild and wayward are,
Away their wanton waywardness shall throw.
By one desire two spirits shall be bound :
Found, thou shalt find, and, finding, shalt be found.

Thou'rt fain this day for joys that quickly end :
Thou livest for small profits, quick returns.
In every place thou findest out a friend ;
For every lovely thing thy spirit burns.
Too long pursued, that quest to surfeit turns ;
Weary of childish joys, the heart grows dull.
Thy spirit, that of life and youth is full,
Out of these little loves true loving learns.
In one great longing thou shalt find the truth,
Passing from boyhood on to manhood's youth.

September, 1913.

FOOL YOUTH

THOU, whose soul has grown grey,
Hast thou too had thy day ?
Hast thou loved as we love ?
As we strive
Hast thou striven ?
We are young, thou art old :
Thou art faint, we are bold.
Hast thou given
And taken ?
Dost thou linger forsaken ?
We have valour to prove,
We alert, we alive.

We alert, we alive,
We will love, we will strive,
Though our frail love must die ;
Though all laughter and gladness,
All passion and madness,

All stress and all strain,
Turn to pain.
Life is long :
We are strong :
Hope is high.

They have told me thy tale.
Thou wast mad
As we mad ones to-day,
Being glad,
Being gay.
Long ago
Thou wast blest.
Joy is best.
Shall it fail ?
Even so——

Mad with love, mad with joy—
So the world drove thee forth.
The cold hearts of the north
Could not feel thy desire,
Could not know the decoy
That had lured thee away.
Thou wast great on the day
When they trailed thee in mire.

Thou hadst joy in thy season,
Great joy and scant sorrow,
Having routed all reason,
Having found all delight.
But soon came the night
And the morrow.

Weary days then awhile,
When thy heart had grown chill,
From the world an exile,
Left alone with thy pain.
The old life past recall,
The new chosen in vain :
All joy turned to ill.

Thou art weary of striving,
Since all striving's for naught,
Since the love men go catching
Turns carrion, once caught.
And both hunter and quarry
In the passionate chase
Soon or later grow sorry
And drop from their place.
Thou art weary of living,
Of fighting and snatching.

But we young, who have learnt not
The dead truths thou hast learnt,
We will live, we will strive,
While the rapture endures.
Strong of heart, weak of wit,
As the moth we will flit
Where the candle allures.
Have our love, being burnt not,
Have our thrill, being burnt.

August, 1913.

DOUBTS IN ABSENCE

DEAREST, I have no wit to tell
Whether in truth you love me well.
Our love has been so quick a fire,
So winged with passionate desire,
So soon embodied, and so hot,
It may be that you love me not.
We asked not why our lips must take
Kisses, their raging thirst to slake ;
Deeming each hour enough for joy
We sought not knowledge, to destroy
Our careless happiness.

But you—
Was it delight in something new,
Merely glad youth's hot love of life,
That made you set your heart on strife
With my cold spirit, that so long
Had waited for your swallow song ?
I do not know : I cannot know.
Already seems so long ago

Your being with me in this place.
Your lips that used to seek my face
Are grown a memory faint and wan,
I scarce recall your eyes that shone.
Nothing is left me in my need
Save rising doubt and savage greed,
And at your love I can but guess,
Dearest, forgive my foolishness.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

AS the sun to things seen
Is thy presence to me.
Being weak, I am strong :
Being bond, I am free.
Nothing sordid or mean
To our love can belong.

Wise is our day,
We have chosen our way ;
We have chained our desire
To a star.
We burn, and our bodies are fire
As souls are.

In thine eyes is a look that is deeper
Than looks save of lovers can be.
Can I harvest thy splendour, O reaper ?
Can I garner thy soul that is free
As the sea, the destroyer, the keeper,
The secret, the all-knowing sea ?

I will strive; for thine arms are around me :
I will strive; for thy kisses are strong.
To thy conquering car thou hast bound me,
My spoils to thy triumph belong.
At the end of the day thou hast crowned me :
Thou hast shown me the right and the wrong.

Whatsoever we choose
Shall be great by our love.
We will venture nor fear :
Every way let us prove.
We can nothing refuse
That may bring us more near.

Take : this is my flesh,
I am fast in thy mesh.
One body, one soul,
We are greatest and least.
We are even as the whole—
God is found in the beast.

September, 1913.

MAKING AND BREAKING

NO longer I'll complain
That knowledge brings no joy,
That all the art I gain
Is cunning to destroy.

Destroyers, we create ;
Creating, we undo.
All things that now are great
Out of destruction grew.

September, 1913.

CONTRAST

DOWN the street, in a crowd,
I hear one singing
A strong, sweet song,
Singing loud, singing long,
As a bold bird flinging
Glad notes to the sky—
Notes that I
Past my window catch flowing,
No one knowing.

Revellers devout,
Rebel rout,
Ye who worship your god in the mad
drinking-bout,
Why come ye this way ?
Glad singer, thou spendest thy breath
Where to-day
Dwelleth sorrow,
And to-morrow
Shall be death.

One here lieth dying
That was even as ye,
One that caught pleasure flying,
One that knew not regret.
He was strong, he was free,
As the wind or the sea :
Upon joy being set,
High or low, near or far,
He would follow his star.

Even now in his weak body flickers
The high heart, adventurous and bold ;
Yet the hot spirit bickers
With the flesh growing cold.
Though he fail in the night
And forget all delight,
He shall cease : but he groweth not old.

O sons of all joy,
And thou, singer, whose voice is the
 voice of a boy,
When the last word is said
O'er him dead,
And the earth covers over
All that's left of this lover,

Thy song shall be sweetest,
Thy requiem meetest
For this son of all joy,
For this man with the heart of a boy.

August, 1913.

THE RETURN

I HAVE wandered long in the desert places ;
I have sought for beauty, and found but pain.
O soul of my soul, I shall find thee again
In the city, alive with the surging of faces.

I have sought to forget, where the great hills ring
Deep valleys, made green by the quickening silver
of streams,
And the solitude ever
Snatches my voice into silence, reverberates silence
for sound,
Till the glory of space and of solitude, vast and
profound,
Steals o'er my spirit and bids me to sing
That a dream is the world, and a dream all en-
deavour,
And love but the dream of all dreams.

From the hills I return :
I'll not strive to forget.
The old passion that died
Ceases never to burn.
The heart in me has cried,
' Here is naught but regret.'

Back to the city, though there thou abidest,
And the whole is alive with the memory of thee,
I will go with thee, phantom of love, as thou
 stridest
Up street and down street, every wonder to see.
I will walk with thee ever, through fair and
 through sordid ;
With thee will I pass among rich men and poor.
Not in vain in my heart has thy treasure been
 hoarded ;
Not for naught do I thrill at thy name evermore.

Through the thronged ways by night
I will follow thy feet :
I will stay where thou stayest and rest with thee
 still.
And whom thou dost greet
'Neath the flaunting gaslight
I will greet with a will.

For thy spirit shall walk as of old ;
All life thou shalt love to explore.
Thou shalt still with thy songs turned to gold
The sordid, the base, and the poor.

For although thou art dead
And a sign has been set,
Lest the world should forget,
O'er thy last lonely bed,
Thou wast ever so queer
That I know not the grave that could hold thee,
The earth or the coffin would dare to enfold thee,
Or keep thee away
From the glad and the gay,
From the bustle of towns,
From Parisian gowns,
And the wine, and the laughter and cheer.

I was ever the sad one,
When thou wast the mad one.
Thou wast up, dear, and doing,
Whilst yet I was ruing
The last deed undone,
The last lost bit of fun.
And dead yesterday's passion
My thoughts would refashion,

When thou long hadst forgot
Such a joy, and wast hot
On the trail of another ;
For all joy was thy brother.

These lonely days without thee
Shall hardly seem less sad,
Because I need not doubt thee,
Or deem thee gone to bad.
No longer room for doubting,
As when, in midst of pleasure,
I bore with all thy flouting,
For fear to lose my treasure.

I shall wander again in the populous places,
And many be with me, but one be no more.
But a spirit shall walk where thou walkedst of yore,
In the city, alive with the surging of faces.

August, 1913.

SURRENDER

INTO my presence thou art come
Out of the silence and the night
To bring me utterance who was dumb,
To turn my blindness into sight,
To teach my groping arms to embrace,
And bid my kisses seek thy face.

I have forgotten joy so long
I am grown dull and slow to learn.
I am so weak and thou so strong
No love of thine my love can earn.
Awhile of thine abundance give
That I may learn again to live.

Yet long ago the way I knew ;
My mouth was hot for joy as thine.
Out of my soul's aspiring grew
Life's perfect poem, love divine.
My wilful fingers used to stray
In someone's hair, as thine this day.

Ah, someone's! How the heart forgets!
And yet this calls the old thrill back.
Soon shall I learn to pay my debts,
Regain the old familiar knack.
Thy kisses have strange power to stir
Memory of joys ere sorrows were.

I'll quite forget the grief that bade
Me cease from loving years ago:
The weak and foolish vows I made
In anger to the winds I throw.
Since thou art greater than my oath,
I'll love thee willing, and not loth.

I feel thy warm breath on my cheek:
Thy kisses rain upon my face.
Body and spirit, glad and weak,
Yield in thy passionate embrace.
Thy joys be mine, thy will my will.
O lover, clasp me closer still.

September, 1913.

VALUES

WHEN on small things my heart is set,
And seeks not grandeur for its prize,
Men praise my choice and call me wise
No more for childish joys to fret.
Yet there was something in your eyes
That told me, dear, when last we met,
You would not have me quite forget
The glory the cold world denies.

I'll do your bidding, and not men's :
Grown tired and old, they cannot know.
In the burden and heat of life's long day
These wiseacres have lost all sense.
But when you bid me put away
My childish love, then be it so.

September, 1913.

JOY

LET Joy be our king ;
We are strong, we are young.
To the winds let us fling
Thought of wrong, thought of sadness.
Let no song go unsung :
Let all songs be of gladness.

I am thine, thou art mine.
For this hour we will heed not
The frown and the scorns
Of the world that we need not.
Though it crown us with thorns,
It shall crown us divine.

Press thy mouth on my mouth ;
Twine thine arms closely round me.
Let me feel thy heart beating,
Thy breath on my cheek.
My soul that was weak
With the season of drouth
Hath grown strong at our meeting ;
At last thou hast found me.

Care no more for leave-taking :
All severance shall seem
From this hour the assurance
Of joy but deferred.
As the mist of a dream
We will scatter at waking
The cold world's abhorrence
With a look, with a word.

Rain thy kisses upon me,
As mine rain on thee.
Not in vain have I won thee,
Not for naught are we free.
Though our day be as brief
As the life of a flower,
We are greater than grief
By the might of this hour.

We have conquered the world
With a loving embrace.
We are throned with the spheres ;
We are changeless as space.
We have breathed our desire
Into all living things.
Of the world we are kings :
We are great as the Sire.

NEW BEGINNINGS

As the Sire we are great,
By whom all things were made,
The hills that endure
And the lilies that fade,
Fair womanhood's lure,
Man's passion and hate,
The day and the night,
And our love and delight.

Then our lord shall be Joy :
For this hour we are strong.
No power can destroy
Passion young, passion hot.
To our love we belong—
And the future is not.

August, 1913.

DUALISMS

I.

SOUL, aspirest thou ?
Arms, do ye long ?
Man, desirest thou ?
Canst thou be wrong ?

II.

I sought the spirit in thy flesh :
I knew not what the end should be.
So fast thou hast me in thy mesh
My spirit is made flesh for thee.

III.

Body and soul we met :
Let both unite us.
If one do wrong, then let
The other right us.

June—July, 1913.

THE MODERN SPIRIT

NO song for the world that abuses
The singers of songs.
No song for my love who refuses
To right me my wrongs.

But a song for the world of my dreaming,
The Land of the Soul,
And a song for the love whose redeeming
My heart shall make whole.

A song for the future whose glory
Shall brighten the past,
And a song for the lovers whose story
The world shall outlast.

But no song for the world that makes ravage
Of all that is fair,
And no song for you, my young savage—
And greatly you'll care!

December, 1912.

FALSEHOOD AND LOSS

YEARS ago,
When I was young,
Someone I know
A secret flung
Upon my ears that all unwilling heard
A sad, unwelcome, often-looked-for word.

False answer made I to that cry of pain :
I could not bear to lose the love I prized.
I gave for fierce words soft words back again :
Though loving not,
A crooked answer I devised
To please that passion hot.

Older and wiser am I grown :
The sorrow that hath seared us both
Hath given me hard truth for mine own,
Although I learnt it late and loth.

Love without passion, life without desire—
These some may choose, and dwell in drab content.
But we, dowered with a spark of the heavenly fire,
Our hopes on higher joys must ever set.
With such poor wine our souls were never meant,
Forsaking grandeur, to assuage their thirst :
That other, being of spirits best and first,
Could never the impossible hope forget.
Yea, friend, you could only regret,
Or aspire.

Have you indeed forgiven yet
The weak and futile charity
That bade me speak, to pay my debt,
That fatal and accursèd lie ?

I knew you for the truest friend :
As friends love, we had loved so long.
Our friendship seemed so fine and strong
I could not bear to make an end.

Yet I sometimes saw you gaze at me
Not quite with a friend's look—something, too,
Like hunger lurked in your eye. I knew
In my heart of a thing I dared not see.

Friend, not alone to pay my debt,
I let you think I loved you so.
I could not bear to bid you go.
Can you forgive me yet ?

Perhaps I hoped that your love some day
Might teach me the way.
Perhaps I was sure I could never know
In my heart such fire,
In my limbs such desire.
I cannot say : it was long ago.

Perhaps I was but a selfish fool
To waste my life and yours as well,
To send my soul to a Spartan school,
And bring you down to the brink of hell.

Too late I learnt how the high gods give
Joy to true lovers, a curse to those
Who take love in vain.
Empty lives do they live :
Having nothing, they lose :
Barren wisdom they gain.

By my sin have I lost you
All hope and all rapture.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Your passion that cost you
What no power can recapture
Lieth cold.
We grow old.
Life flows past.
Is all one at last ?

August, 1913.

PRESENCE AND ABSENCE

THOU art gone, and the gloom
 Settles down on my room :
 I am faint with the stress
 Of my parting from thee.
 In this house for a while shall not be
 Loving look or caress.

This place that so long
 Of our rapture was full,
 Hath grown silent and dull,
 Hath grown empty and chill.
 I am weak, dear, of will.
 Art thou strong ?

More joy have I known
 Than my heart could contain.
 Every joy that I knew
 Turns to sorrow again.
 Thou wast freshening as dew ;
 To the seed in me sown
 Thy kisses were quickening as rain.

My heart that is blind
Goeth groping for thee.
Thou art swift as the wind,
As a song thou art free.
As a wingèd breeze flying,
As a melody dying,
Was thy parting from me.

Thou hast raised me from death
With the power of thy breath.
That my heart may be whole
Thou hast given thy soul.

Thou shalt come, dear, again.
I will sorrow no longer.
Only faint spirits brood
Over pleasures gone past.
Out of absence and pain
We will make our love stronger.
Out of grief at the last
Cometh good.

August, 1913.

APOLOGIA

ESCAPED one snare, I to another fly :
In every place I seek the errant joy.
Pain has no power my ardour to destroy ;
I fear no sorrow, pass no gladness by.
The past, the future—are these worth a sigh ?
The breathless present still shall be my toy :
My spirit, like a rapt, unconscious boy,
Seeks splendour—and finds splendour ever nigh.

These joys, you say, turn bitter. Be it so.
Sweet are they now, though bitter soon they be.
From the common doom I ask not to be free
All life, be it glad or sorry, would I know.
Ready to pay my reckoning when I must,
While joy endures, in joy I put my trust.

THE RECORD
AN OCCASIONAL DIARY IN VERSE
1910—1912

OXFORD,
November 9, 1912.

*The universal spirit broods
On simple things no less than grand—
The essence of a thousand goods
Clasped in a single hand.*

THE RECORD

I

I HAVE seen thee but a day,
Left thee as I met thee,
See thee never more I may,
Yet fain would not forget thee.

For thy presence moved me so,
And thy beauty tender,
Praises thou wilt never know
Lovingly I render.

Eyes that glanced beneath the sky,
Paths that met and parted.
Sorrowful awhile am I:
Be thou merry-hearted.

2

CHILD of gladness,
My heart is like a flower that seeks thy sun.

Child of sadness,
I long for thee as stars for the silent moon.

Child of light,
My heart ascends with thy bright day begun.

Child of night,
My spirit craves thy dark, mysterious boon.

O soaring power,
Thou shalt prevail not in the midnight hour.

O paler beam,
Thou growest wan before the morning gleam.

Children of time,
Share thus the fleeting homage of my rhyme.

3

THE day is quickly ended,
When I thy face may see :
Sleepless and unattended
I lie and think of thee.

The long night has descended—
How long it seems to me—
The fleet day soon is ended,
When I have been with thee.

4

DEAREST, I cannot dare
To tell thee all my heart :
So sweet the vain days are
I cannot bear to part.
What were all else to me,
If I must part from thee ?

So sweet the days wherein
Naught of thy love I have,
Nor any hope to win,
Nor any power to save,
O piteous constancy,
That wastes my time and me.

Yet till these days are spent,
Since I may call thee friend,
I needs must rest content,
And wait the hopeless end,
That, spite of thee and me,
At last, I know, must be.

5

I TOLD my love to the embers,
Burning dim and low,
Whose faint light half-remembers
The fire of long ago.

I spoke (for love brought madness)
As if thou heardst me there,
As yet in hope of gladness
Wouldst thou but hear my prayer.

A little speech in the darkness,
With no one there to hear,
And now again comes starkness
And the loneliness I fear.

6

NOW will I tell thee all,
Though the cup be but gall;
I care not what befall.

I can no longer bear
To see thy face grow fair
With joys I may not share

What though the words I speak
Only avail to break
The bonds of friendship weak?

What though my tale make end
Even of the name of friend?
Break that thou canst not mend.

Once I had hope to gain;
Mad thoughts my heart was fain
Idly to entertain.

For me, in vain appeal,
I dreamed that thou couldst feel
The sting that none may heal.

I have grown wise in this:
I know past hope it is
To gain what I did miss.

Yet it is sweet to dream
On the familiar theme,
Until I almost seem

To have my whole desire,
Winning, on fruitless hire,
The feignèd joy of fire.

Dreams can but ease awhile
Lips that care not to smile,
Hearts that forget their guile.

Their fitful visions fly
Fast from the memory :
Sleep-born, in sleep they die.

I need severer art
To heal my heavy heart
Now that we two must part.

Wherefore, if this may move,
Search in my heart to prove
The power of fruitless love.

I love thee; it is spoken.
Accepted the written token :
Thus let the spell be broken.

7

O HAPPY tree,
Rejoice with me ;
Thou too hast found thy fullness with the spring.

O joyous thrush,
Sing from thy bush ;
Thy gladness still pursues thy wandering wing.

O deep brown earth,
Womb of all birth,
Exult ; for I am fruitful as thou art.

O far, blue sky,
Be glad as I ;
Make bright thy face to please a lover's heart.

O earth-born soul,
Soar past control ;
For thou hast found the crown of all desire.

O heavenly sun,
Ere day be done,
Consume my gladness in thy deathless fire.

8

OUR time is short, my dearest ;
Yet, on this present day,
The future that thou fearest
Seems very far away.

To-day has gifts in plenty
Why heed to-morrow's frown.
For we, who love at twenty,
Can live the future down.

Then let us take our pleasure—
Young hearts shall have their fill—
And let the morrow measure
Whatever pains it will.

9

I HAVE seen, I have seen,
Thou art fair as the sun,
Thy glances as keen,
Thy changes as many.
How thy radiances run
To my spirit that longs for thy face that is fairer
and dearer than any !

I have felt thee so near
That the sound of thy breathing
Has fall'n on mine ear
Like a whisper of gladness,
And the warmth of it wreathing
Around me has been as the breath of a spirit of
exquisite madness.

I have touched thee ; thy touch
Has been warm on my flesh,
Lying lightly, ev'n such
As the touch of desire.
How the memory is fresh
Of a touch that has run to my heart with a trail
of unquenchable fire !

IO

THOU art the blue of the sky,
Thou art the grey of the cloud,
Thou art the lamb's slight cry,
And the train that roars aloud.

Thou art the sum of all,
Thou art the soul in me:
No sound or sight can fall
But is full of the form of thee.

I I

I HAVE lain with thee beside me,
And watched the pale stars shine,
And felt thy form beside me,
Through the long night divine.

O loveliness commingling
In my heart with the starry sky,
Thou hast usurped the splendour
Of God's eternity.

12

AT A CONCERT

ONLY a touch of our hands by chance—
Oh, but a trail of flame.
Only a thoughtless, joyful glance,
But who shall name its name?

A look from thee, and thy body warm,
And the music mingling clear,
And out again to the heedless swarm,
Where I may not call thee dear.

13

CLAIM worship and not honour, if ye dare :
Worship abides, when trust has flown elsewhere.

Crave not to love ; for, loving, thou shalt find
Thou givest gifts to which the world is blind.

Turn not from love ; for whoso loves indeed
Can find naught else to satisfy his need.

Blame not the world that scorns thee in thy need :
To claim both love and sympathy were greed.

Love shall have slaves when other gods are lonely ;
For all shall praise and serve his godhead only.

14

A FLAUNTING cavalier
With a cloak of royal blue,
Without respect or fear.
(Queens' hearts were never true.)

A maid with modest eye
At her window her tresses combing,
A queen's lord passing by.
(Kings' hearts were ever roaming.)

A godlike king on a throne,
Beside him a great queen's glory,
Two hearts, each heart alone.
(Of kings and queens is the story ?)

15

NOT lightly have I loved,
Nor lightly let thee go,
Ere I have vainly proved
All lover's arts I know.

Then, if I leave thee now,
Think not thou art not dear :
A dearer love than thou
Shall never feel me near.

Thou hast been all to me :
I, thine to mar or make.
Still mine the thought of thee ;
This thing thou canst not take.

So, while thou followest
The pleasure of thy heart,
I, who have left the quest,
Will praise thee by my art.

16

IT is good to love, though love have a hopeless
end:

I thank the gods I have lived to call thee friend.
Yea, I thank the gods, though this be the end of all,
Though their decree is fixed and must befall,
Yet I have seen thy face. It is hard to say
That all must end, but I know not another way.
It is hard to live, when the light that burned ahead
Has flashed up high for a moment and sunk down
dead.

It is hard ; but the light of life still burns within,
And the love of thee that has lost the hope to win,
Still is a mighty power and cannot perish :
It shall guide my life, though it have none to
cherish.

Though I have lost, thank God for remembrance
still :

For how can I say that my life has fallen out ill,
While still the memory of thee stands fair and fast
And the image of thee, and a present built of the
past ?

Time was, I dreamed of the future, glad dreams and
wild;
And now and again I woke from my dream and
smiled;
For I knew even then, when my heart grew sober
and dull,
That, with this I had won already, my cup was full:
But now I must lose even that: thank God again
That memory lives of the love I have loved in vain.

In vain? nay, not quite vainly, if this be so:
For the image of thee is a precious thing to know,
And the thought of thee shall be my paraclete,
When again the fates deny some thing that is sweet.
Then I will think of thee, and thy loss shall seem
A little thing, 'betwixt a dream and a dream.'
Thou, who hast given scant love, hast given me this,
A new life, fashioned of dreams, whose might it is
To heed not at all the fates that grudge and deny
The pitiful guerdon man selleth his soul to buy.
I have lost the best. Be it so. Shall the heart
repine,
Or seek bought pleasures to soothe, or the savour of
wine?
Nay, if a man love well, having lost the best,
He will keep the memory of that and turn to his rest.

The years have many a deed they will yet unfold,
And my heart shall soon wake to the call of their
glittering gold.
They have gifts yet to offer, and, though they deny
me thy glory,
O best of all, who knoweth the end of the story?

17

BECAUSE I have no art
To celebrate delight,
Love hath no will
My heart
To fill
With his victorious might.

Because my songs awake
Only to solace grief,
When I am sad
To make
Me glad
He bringeth no relief.

Because my songs are cold
My life must know no bliss ;
My barren days
Have sold
Their praise
To buy me naught but this.

I than my verse am less :
Yet give me strength of song,
And I will praise
And bless
The days
That to my art belong.

18

I HAVE sold the moon for a kiss
And each star for a sigh.
And the noontide sun for a smile,
Hapless I.

I have won a kiss for the moon,
And a sigh for each star,
And a smile for the noontide sun,
Happier far.

For the moon shall die ere the dawn,
And the stars shall fade,
And the sun to night shall yield,
Afraid.

But I feel the print of the kiss,
And the sighs I know,
And the smile I can see as then
Long ago.

19

THE great sun's golden glory writhes on the
parching ground ;

The breathless woods are silent, the air has not a
sound.

The dead day yields no gladness : beneath the sheer,
sharp sky,

Upon this hill of sorrow, I watch the great birds fly.

They fly with leaden pinions and gaunt uneasy flight,
Sweeping in sad procession across the ways of light :
Their gloomy shapes, as shadows, brood on the
wingless airs ;

My heart that mourns thine absence the heavy
silence shares.

I dare not speak within me the only words I know,
That I have lost thy presence—I who have loved
thee so.

I cannot meet the silence that shrouds thine empty
place ;

But on this hill of weeping I watch the hard sky's
face.

20

DEAREST, I scarce have heart to love thee
more :

Long love without requital only breeds
In the heart's rich meadow-land such poisonous
weeds.

As choke the sweet growth that sprang there before.
I have no salve to heal my spirit sore,
No stored-up joy whereon the full heart feeds ;
The future brings no hope of worthier deeds,
No grandeur can the buried past restore,
Only weak words shall ease my long regret ;
For, though I scorn them, these shall serve me still
With fond imaginations that beget
False pleasures to beguile mine eager will,
That I my spirit's craving may fulfil
With art's void dreams upon a phantom set.

21

AS that old banished man who slew his sire
And with his mother shared incestuous bed,
And many bitter tears thereafter shed,—
For the high gods spared not their deathless ire—
Wandering alone, consumed with vain desire
I dream again of pleasures idly sped,
Content, now present joys and hopes are dead,
To warm my spirit with remembered fire.
For love, that hath no boundary and no term,
Our deeds have made as mortal as the dust,
And cold decay hath slain the swelling germ
Ev'n as it broke the hard earth's frozen crust.
Would God thou mightst have stayed the canker-
worm
A little while, till we had found our trust.

22

WE passed by chance at the door,
The gloom was in thy face :
This is the self-same place,
Here where we meet no more.

I had often seen thee glad
Or listless, or asleep,
But my heart gave a leap
To see thy face so sad.

And my lips idly moved,
And my mouth strove to cry,
As thou wast passing by,
O lost and dearly loved.

23

WHEN sad thoughts throng around me,
And memory scarce is dear,
What then shall ease my sorrow,
What then shall calm my fear ?

No longer hopes avail me,
Nor hopeless dreams sustain :
Thou, only thou, my dearest,
Canst make me man again.

24

ONE loving word has no less power
To re-create the long-past hour,
Because thy face is seldom seen
And I must live on what has been.

For sometimes still I dare to dream
Thou lovest as thy looks do seem,
When I have seen thine eyes grow kind,
As if they speak a loving mind.

E'en now a glance from thee can make
The world grow joyous for thy sake,
And bring past pleasures back to me,
Wherein I live again with thee.

25

ALONE in the silent room with thee
(How slow the clouds lag past)
I sit and dreams steal over me
(Love only flieth fast).

Dreams of old dreams attend my thought
(The slow clouds cross the pane)
Dreams of lost pleasures dearly bought
(No cloud returns again).

Thou still art near me, yet not mine
(Sad clouds, awhile be still)
There is no loveliness like thine
(Love wounds, but scorns to kill).

O sorrow, passing human wit
(The wan clouds all are flown)
Here in this silent room we sit
Two souls, each soul alone.

26

THE heart in me is as the heart
Of a shrunken man and old ;
For love is dead and faith is fled
And pleasure has grown cold.
No verse of mine can make to shine
Again the hours of gold.

I know not why my heart has left
Glad hope and gallant faith.
Only the memory of my love
Stands as a chattering wraith,
And bids me share the bootless prayer
Its twitched mouth whispereth.

No power of verse can turn the worse
Back to the better pain ;
Nor can I know if time will show
That I may love again :
For now the cold thoughts drop on me
With a sting of angry rain.

The cold thoughts drip, and on my lip
 Remembered pleasures burn.
I cannot fling from me the sting
 Of a joy my arms unlearn;
And in my breast the forlorn heart
 Gapes as an empty urn.

27

I LOVED thee not for a lesson in love, but because I was fain ;
I have earned no love, but only a lesson to love not again.
Since thou didst leave and unman me, I have found another as fair ;
I would love, but the lesson is fixed, and alas, the heart is bare.

28

EPILOGUE

IT'S mighty odd
To be a God,
And sit above the world and view
Men doing things I used to do.

It's but a year
Since I was there,
And had my loves and hates, and spent
My time in grief and merriment.

I knew a boy :
'Tis now my joy
To see him grown a man, who plays
The part I played in former days.

For I have won
Above the sun
A careless freedom from all grief
And pleasure that's but freedom's thief.

THE RECORD

I dwell sublime
Past space and time :
I live secure from every doubt
That used to blow my mind about.

But it's so odd
To be a God,
That sometimes I could almost go
And play with people down below.

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